

Appln. No. 09/933,332
Amdt. dated Dec. 8, 2005
Reply to Office Action of Sep. 8, 2005
Docket No. BOC9-2001-0007 (242)

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of September 8, 2005 (Office Action). As this response is timely filed within the 3-month shortened statutory period, no fee is believed due.

Claims 1-30 and 36-62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,564,251 to Gudjonsson, *et al.* (Gudjonsson). In response, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 16, 36, 51. Claims 2, 3, 37, 38 have been cancelled. The claims amendments are fully supported throughout the Specification. (See, e.g., Specification, p. 13, line 14 - p. 14, line 6.) No new matter has been introduced by virtue of the claim amendments.

With respect to independent Claims 1 and 36, as amended, and Claim 28, Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach a method for sharing contact list information between participants of a chat session according to a method of Applicants' invention. For example, Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach the step of determining whether a contact list belonging to a first party to the chat session can be modified by a first party to the chat session, wherein the contact list comprises contact information pertaining to parties not included in the chat session. Moreover, Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach that, if the first party's contact list is modifiable, the second party can modify the first party's contact list by adding contact information to the contact list.

Reference is made at pages two and three of the Office Action to several portions of Gudjonsson. In one cited portion, Gudjonsson describes a method by which parties, one using a computer and another a telephone, for example, can "rendezvous" in "any kind of session." (Col. 25, lines 6-20.) In this portion, however, Gudjonsson says nothing about one party modifying a contact list of another party. In another cited

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portion, Gudjonsson describes data structures maintained on user servers by a user service. (Col. 26, line 37 - Col. 27, line 4.) Each user of the service in Gudjonsson has "one blinded list and one seeing list," but these lists having nothing to do with contact information pertaining to third parties; instead, the lists discriminate among other users who are and are not allowed to "see" a user's "online status." Again, this has nothing to do with contact lists, let alone the modification of one user's contact list by another user. It follows that Gudjonsson further fails to teach, either expressly or inherently, one party's modifying another's contact list by adding third-party contact information to the contact list.

Applicants respectfully assert, therefore, that Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach every feature recited in independent Claims 1 and 36, as amended, and Claim 28. Thus, Applicants respectfully maintain that the claims thus define over the prior art. Applicants further respectfully assert that whereas each of Claims 2-15 and 37-50 depends from one of amended independent Claims 1 or 36, while reciting additional features, these dependent claims likewise define over the prior art.

With respect to independent Claims 16, 23, and 51, as amended, Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach a method for sharing contact list information by comparing the respective contact lists of different parties, identifying similar contacts among the lists, and presenting similar contacts in a pre-selected visual format and dissimilar contacts in a different visual format. In a portion cited at page 5 of the Office Action, Gudjonsson describes a mathematical model for determining network scalability. (Col. 28, line 65 - Col. 30, line 60; see also Table 4 of Col. 29.) In describing the mathematical model, Gudjonsson observes that "usually connected users share some contacts; i.e., some two connected users x and y will be interested in following the online status of the same contact z – therefore, users x and y share the contact z."

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This portion of Gudjonsson, however, fails to expressly or inherently teach every feature recited in amended independent Claims 16, 23, and 51. Firstly, the mathematical model described by Gudjonsson has nothing to do with how to compare, identify, or present common contacts; Gudjonsson merely makes the observation that some commonality is likely. Merely recognizing that there may be common contacts between two parties, however, teaches nothing, expressly or inherently, about how to compare contact lists and, by so doing, identifying common contacts in the respective contact lists. Gudjonsson further fails to expressly or inherently teach presenting the common contacts. In particular Gudjonsson nowhere teaches anything about presenting similar contacts in a pre-selected visual format and dissimilar contacts in a different visual format based on an identification and comparison of different contact lists.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach every feature recited in independent Claims 16, 23, and 51, as amended, and that the claims thus define over the prior art. Applicants further respectfully assert that whereas each of Claims 2-22 and 51-57 depends from one of amended independent Claims 16 or 51, while reciting additional features, these dependent claims likewise define over the prior art.

With respect to independent Claims 24 and 59, Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach providing contact management in a chat session according to any of the methods taught by Applicants' invention. For example, Gudjonsson fails to teach, expressly or inherently, the sending of a token of introduction originated by one chat session participant to another – wherein the token of introduction provides a recommendation for the other chat session participant – and transferring the token of introduction to yet a third chat session participant. Similarly, Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach that, if the third chat session participant accepts the token of

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introduction, a third contact list with contact information for the second chat session participant can be modified.

In a portion cited at page 5 of the Office Action, Gudjonsson describes a network service that facilitates a user's knowing an online status of others, setting an online status and storing contacts in a hierarchical list. (Col. 26, lines 30-50; see also Col. 29, line 64 – Col. 30, line 30.) None of these portions, however, pertain to the sending of a token of introduction as taught by Applicants' invention. The only portion of Gudjonsson that seems remotely related to the claims concerns a network service's receiving a contact list request from a user whose user data has not been previously loaded to a user server. (Col. 26, lines 48-50.) Gudjonsson merely states that in such circumstances, a user server loads the user data from the service database. This teaches nothing, however, about one party's sending a token of introduction – a type of electronic letter of introduction – that introduces another party to a third party that knows the originator of the token but the not the party being introduced. (See Specification, p. 24, lines 2-4.)

Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that Gudjonsson fails to expressly or inherently teach every feature recited in independent Claims 24 and 59, and that the claims thus define over the prior art. Applicants also respectfully submit that since dependent Claims 24-27 and 59-64 depend from one of these independent claims while reciting additional features these dependent claims likewise define over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the

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Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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